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Nicaragua called 'beachhead'

CIA chief says Panama Canal Soviet objective

By **CHUCK McCOLLOUGH**
Express-News Staff Writer

CIA Director William Casey blasted the Soviet Union and Cuba during a speech here Saturday to the World Business Council.

The speech was closed to the press but the Washington Times, in an Associated Press report, said Casey's speech was to say the Soviet Union and Cuba has established and are consolidating a "beachhead" in Nicaragua as a launch pad to subvert the rest of Central and South America.

At stake is control of the Panama Canal and, ultimately, the oil fields of the Middle East, the newspaper quoted Casey's speech as saying.

The newspaper said Casey's speech sets out the Reagan administration's view of why Americans should consider their vital interest threatened by a Marxist government in a small nation in Central America.

Casey refused to talk to reporters after the address.

The Washington Times obtained an advanced look at the text of Casey's speech, according to the AP.

The World Business Council is a non-profit group made up of former members of the Young Presidents Organization. The Young Presidents Organization is composed of men who become either owners or presidents of a company doing \$5 million a year in business before the men turn 40.

Once the members turn 49 they retire from the YPO and can join the World Business Council. The WBC was holding its spring conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The press is always barred from the presentations, not just in Casey's case, said Pete Dailey, president of the WBC and a former U.S. ambassador to Ireland.

"It's been that way since the group was founded 15 years ago. The reason for that is we feel there is a better environment for exchange of ideas if the presentations are confidential," Dailey said.

"The purpose of our organization is to make the members better presidents of their respective businesses or organizations. Many members have served time in the diplomatic service such as myself. We discuss our experiences and try to broaden our knowledge," he said.

The group meets three times a year, once overseas and twice in the United States.

Dailey said the group enjoyed the many charms of San Antonio. He especially liked the presentation of Mayor Henry Cisneros, but had one criticism of the mayor.

"I just wish he would become more educated and change parties like Jean Kirkpatrick," Dailey said jokingly. He was referring to Kirkpatrick's recent switch from the Democratic Party to the GOP. She is a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

CIA agent ejects writer from meeting

An Express-News reporter Saturday was physically removed from a meeting by CIA security personnel when the reporter attempted to hear CIA Director William Casey address the World Business Council at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Reporter Chuck McCollough entered the Regency Ball Room East to hear Casey. Once inside he leaned against a wall and started to take notes of Casey's talk.

He heard the door open behind him and felt a firm hand take his shoulder and pull him outside. The hand belonged to a CIA security man. Another CIA security man apologized for the eviction, saying it was WBC policy to bar the press.

McCollough identified himself as a reporter to the CIA men before going inside and asked if he could enter. The CIA security men said to check with WBC officials to see if it was OK. Unable to find any official to ask he went inside and was evicted.

The CIA security men were identified by a member of the WBC staff.

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Crimes against Americans in Mexico drop

Visitors' warning toned down

Washington Post Service

MEXICO CITY — Crimes against American tourists on Mexican highways have fallen sharply since the government beefed up security late last year in response to U.S. complaints, U.S. Embassy officials said Saturday.

This decline, and a new Mexican program to help foreigners with their legal problems, have led the embassy to tone down its public statements about the danger to visitors here, the U.S. officials said. The embassy and State Department are opposing an unusual effort in Congress to require that the U.S. government issue a formal travel advisory to notify Americans about the risks of visiting Mexico.

"More than 4 million Americans visit Mexico each year, and relatively few of them encounter problems," U.S. Ambassador John Gavin said in a speech Thursday to the World Business Council in San Antonio. "We don't believe conditions warrant a travel advisory at this time."

The question of tourist safety has become a significant irritant in U.S.-Mexican relations in the past year. U.S. complaints about crimes against visitors were interpreted here as a threat to the vital tourism industry and were labeled a "defamation campaign" against Mexico.

U.S. tourists spent about \$2 billion here last year, and some resort regions depend almost exclusively on tourist dollars.

An embassy official acknowledged that earlier U.S. statements about dangers to tourists had opened up "a Pandora's box" and contributed to exaggerated fears about traveling in Mexico. Those worries were reinforced by the much publicized killing of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent in February in Guadalajara, which triggered the interest in Congress.

The issue originally gained prominence last September when Gavin publicly called attention to a series of crimes against American tourists on Mexican highways. From March until September of last year, six U.S. citizens were murdered in highway incidents most of which involved armed robbery.

Gavin also said at the time that the U.S. government was considering issuing a travel advisory for Mexico. Such an advisory is a statement distributed to airlines, tour operators and other travel-related companies warning that visits to a certain country are risky.

Mexican government officials were quick to point out that the number of crimes against tourists is not unusually high considering the large number of visitors here. The president's office passed out statistics purportedly showing that the crime rate in Mexico City is much lower than in U.S. cities: 1,654 crimes per 100,000 population here in 1984, compared to 8,431 in Washington, for instance.

Embassy officials acknowledged that, on a "volume basis," the level of crime here has been "relatively low." And while Gavin did not say so at the time, one of his main reasons

for airing the possibility of a travel advisory in September was to pressure the Mexicans to speed up, or even begin, investigations of past crimes against U.S. citizens.

"What we have been concerned with primarily is not so much the number of crimes committed against Americans but the less-than-vigorous investigation and prosecution of these crimes," Gavin said.

The U.S. pressure has borne some fruit, although it is too early to tell whether improvement will be permanent. In particular, increased patrols by police cars and Mexico's bright green highway rescue vehicles called "Green Angels," have cut down on roadway crimes.